May 4, 2017

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman,

The National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) commends you for proposing the State Sponsored Visa Pilot Program of 2017 (S. xxx), legislation designed to address the workforce needs of businesses across the U.S. NRCA believes your proposal is an innovative effort that could be a critical part of the solution to the workforce challenges faced by roofing contractors in today’s economy.

Established in 1886, NRCA is one of the nation’s oldest trade associations and the voice of professional roofing contractors worldwide. NRCA has approximately 3,500 contractors in all 50 states who are typically small, privately held companies, with the average member employing 45 people and attaining sales of about $4.5 million per year.

Today, workforce development issues are one of the top challenges facing roofing contractors. NRCA members continue to experience difficulties in obtaining qualified workers needed to meet demand, with our members consistently indicating they could increase their volume of work by 10 to 20 percent if they could fill vacant positions within their companies. NRCA expects worker shortages to become even more acute in the future due to an aging workforce and other demographic trends.

Given this problem, the establishment of a well-structured, effective temporary worker program is vital to meet the needs of roofing and other industries in a dynamic economy. NRCA believes such a program should be governed by market forces, ensure the protection of U.S. workers, and be structured to provide a legal avenue that enables our nation’s job creators to obtain the workers needed to meet demand, grow their businesses and increase their input into the U.S. economy.

NRCA believes your new legislation is an innovative approach to addressing the workforce challenges of the 21st century and welcomes this proposal, which would allow states to create nonimmigrant visa programs that meet the needs of their economies. NRCA believes this approach has great potential, especially as a supplement to a market-oriented federal program. Clearly, this proposed legislation is moving the debate in a positive direction towards addressing critical workforce needs in a thoughtful manner.
NRCA commends you for crafting this legislation and looks forward to working with you and other lawmakers on this and other proposals designed to meet workforce needs. Clearly, a visa program is a critical element, along with increased border security and enhanced workplace enforcement, to a broad strategy for combating the problem of illegal immigration.

Again, NRCA wishes to commend you for your strong leadership on immigration and workforce issues and looks forward to working with you to include a state-based visa approach as part of effective immigration reform solutions that address the needs of employers in the roofing industry. For more information, please contact Duane Musser, NRCA’s vice president of government relations, at 202-546-7584 or dmusser@nrca.net.

Thank you for your consideration of NRCA’s views on this vitally important issue.

Sincerely,

Dennis Conway
NRCA Chairman 2016 – 2017
President & CEO of Commercial Roofers of Las Vegas, NV